



Cats rise to 4-1 after romps over Ridgway, Ouray

By Joel Priest
Special to the Drum

Craig Kaminsky said on Saturday, Dec. 10 his dream job while growing up near College Park, Md., was to put his name in Terrapin basketball lore after mentors such as Lefty Driesell and Gary Williams.

It took just 3 minutes, 46 seconds for Ouray High School's newest skipper to learn firsthand what coaching fast-paced hoops such as that would be like. And during that span, his Trojans learned that the local "Shane Train" has many more cars than just its engine.

But when that locomotive gets rolling, San Juan Basin Leaguers pray it won't derail.

"We're trying to play together and not really have a main scorer," sophomore Kelton Richmond said, reinforcing coach Chris Valdez's goal of having every Ignacio Bobcat contribute in every outing.

For the first 4 minutes, 14 seconds after tipoff, Kaminsky — replacing Jim Blennis — had the game's tempo where he wanted it, and called a timeout with OHS trailing just 8 to 2. Senior Shane Richmond, though, was the cause of the pause; hitting an early trey from straight away hinted he might actually be prepared to inflict even more damage than the night before, when he devastated Ridgway for a career-high 40 points and 15 rebounds.

Given that the Bobcats downed the Demons 56-39, the potential was too great for Kaminsky to downplay.

And, regretfully, too great for the Trojans to deny. A late hoop off the team's time-tested inbounds play increased IHS's lead to 14-2, and freshman Adison Jones followed with a perfect three and 2:25 still left. Five straight Richmond points warranted another Ouray timeout, but the Cats ran off six more unanswered for a scorching 28-2 lead and three quarters still to play.

Richmond had already posted 14 points, two more than against RHS, and Ignacio had already drained four shots (senior Xavier Watts also sank his first) from beyond the arc. With Valdez already tapping into an eager

corps of reserves, OHS finally cracked double digits with 1:34 left before halftime, making the margin 44-13 at the intermission.

That didn't last long, as the Cats' other Richmond caught fire instantly when play resumed.

Kelton Richmond attacked at will with seven straight points, and Watts drained another triple. Despite a Kyle Kinsel bucket in that mix, the scoreboard showed Ignacio 54, Ouray 15 with 5:52 still left.

"It's exciting ... but lots of work," Kelton Richmond said of his outburst, which totaled 11 by quarter's completion and 13 by the rampage's 77-35 conclusion.

Jones registered another solid game with 13 points, five boards, and another handful of steals — he'd previously nabbed six against the Demons. Sophomore Justin Carver rang up 11 points — seven in the fourth for his curtain call, including the Bobcats' 10th trey — and also collected six rebounds.

Senior Matthew Silva closed the third quarter out with a long bomb, and added another in the fourth quarter for his six points. Watts had made a third three for his nine points, and Shane Richmond finished with a merciful 21 — giving him a season string of 32-36-8-40-21, for a 27.4 per-game norm.

"When they try to double and triple Shane, we've got to have other options," said Valdez, whose squad improved to 4-1 overall (2-0 SJBL). "We wanted to see if everyone else could get involved. We're happy we've got other people scoring, and Shane did what he had to do when he was in."



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Out-leaping teammate Kelton Richmond (21) as well as Ouray's Jacob Fedel (32), Ignacio's Xavier Watts (12) yanks down a rebound during the Bobcats' home win on Saturday, Dec. 10.

Scoring ten in the second half, Kinsel — a returnee from Louisiana — led Ouray (1-3, 0-2) with 14 points. Steven Duce added eight and Jacob Fedel six.

Tanner Skalla had paced Ridgway (record incomplete) inside IHS Gymnasium on Friday, Dec. 9 with 19, while Harley Ryder notched 12 and Nathan Hagemeyer four.

Consistently able to post up 5 feet or fewer from the basket, Richmond registered Ignacio's first dozen points in that game before Watts drained a three to give the Cats a 15-7 lead with 1:54 left in the first quarter.

A 17-5 third quarter broke open what had been a 32-22 halftime advantage, with Richmond making his first exit with 1:50 left, 36 points and 11 boards already to his name. Jones chipped in nine points against RHS, Kelton Richmond two, and Clayton Jefferson and Adam Herrera one apiece.

"We're still having some turnovers, but we're better," Valdez said. "If we keep those consistently under 10 a game, then we're going to be really competitive later on in the season."

Next for Ignacio will be the Aztec, N.M., Tigers' "Rumble in the Jungle," January 5 - 7, 2012.

Lady Cats split league openers

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Any good chef knows this: Pans are best primed with a no-stick cooking spray like PAM. Things cook better.

Funny; Pam works similarly on the basketball court.

Brice Searles had plenty of Pam — as in Pam Cotton — at his disposal on Saturday, Dec. 10, but didn't need much to achieve the desired effect, a 56-17 roasting of Ouray in Ignacio's last game before the holidays.

Serving a mandatory one-game suspension (due to two technical fouls at Bloomfield, N.M., earlier in the week), IHS was Pam-less the night before against Ridgway's post-centered offense — and paid for it with a loss in their San Juan Basin League-opener.

The score, however, proved the Lady Cats can put plenty on the table even without a main course.

"We missed Pam; she's a big part of our team," said guard Jordan Cuthair, after the rout of OHS. "When we got her we came with it — came out strong yesterday too, I think — but having her made us need to push it a lot more than we did [against Ridgway]."

"It was a struggle without her," forward Mariah Vigil agreed. "With her, we're together again."

With Pam Cotton in civilian attire, Ignacio's paint presence against RHS took another hit when forward Valerie Armstrong fouled out with 5:26 left in the game, the Cats down just 50-48.

Having earned a starting-line-up nod, Cuthair canned a three-ball for a brief lead, and after the Lady Demons answered inside, regular sixth-man Sky Cotton burned the visitors for a go-ahead layup.

RHS reserve Leta McNatt fouled out shortly after Armstrong, evening things up a bit, but the Lady Cats were forced to dig extra deep mentally when guard/forward Michelle Simmons was given her fifth foul with 3:03 remaining and the game still very much up for grabs.

"I feel like I cost my team the game," the junior said, though her performance said otherwise.

Single-handedly willing to match Lady Demon senior star Candace Yengst point-for-point, Simmons took her seat with a game-high 26 points and 10 rebounds to boot. Yengst approached a triple-double with her 25-point, 8-board, 6-assist line.

With 1:46 left, Yengst fed forward Bailey Kerson for an easy layup and a 62-56 lead as an exhausted Vigil (11 points, 12 boards) couldn't cover both



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

While protecting her dribble, Ignacio's Jordan Cuthair (1) eyes an approaching screen set by teammate Mariah Vigil (far left) on her Ouray defender during SJBL action on Saturday, Dec. 10 inside IHS Gymnasium.

sides of the lane at once. Sixteen seconds later, IHS sophomore Cloe Seibel fouled out, but the Lady Cats still had some juice — as in "Juice" Cuthair (seven points), who sank a long base-

"We worked more as a team; everyone knew their roles."

— Michelle Simmons, Ignacio Lady Cats guard/forward

line jumper, cutting the deficit to four.

Sky Cotton (10 points) hit a late freebie for Ignacio's final point, before Ridgway hit an insurance bucket.

"Being short's a big thing," quipped Cuthair, "but we try our best to push it to the rack, get fouled as much as we can!"

Kerson amassed 10 points and six boards for RHS (record incomplete), which also got an eight-point, five-rebound surprise from Rowan VanArsdell, five points from Benasutti, and nine from Beamer.

"We had to forget about it, move on, and get up for [the Ouray] game, like we're trying to do for all our games," said Vigil, reflecting after Saturday's win.

In that game, a quick 10-0 start with 3:27 left forced new OHS coach Shawn Carroll — previously the JV boys' coach at 4A Montrose — to call timeout. But Seibel swished a three-pointer with 1:54 left, and Ignacio's 13-

0 lead endured into the second. Ouray, beaten at Mancos the night before, finally got on the scoreboard with two Jackie Saunders free throws and just 0:24 showing before halftime. Cuthair (six points) cruelly killed that buzz though, with another long baseline "J" and only 10 ticks on the clock.

With two free throws beginning the third, Vigil (10 points, five boards) made the score 26-2, and the only suspense came when Armstrong's right knee buckled under Lady Trojan Nicole Edder while scrapping for a ball on the court. With eight seconds left in the frame, she did not return.

Cruising 46-10 with eight minutes still left, Searles was able to play his bench extensively. Akasia Oberly and Roshae Weaver each netted their first varsity hoops, and Sky Cotton iced the cake with eight fourth-quarter points, giving her 10 (to go with six boards).

"We worked more as a team; everyone knew their roles," Simmons said. "We had non-starters go in and finish the game up really good."

Back on the job, Pam Cotton pitched in with four points and seven caroms, while Seibel totaled five points, and Armstrong seven. Oberly finished with four and Weaver two.

Edder turned in a workman-like 11-point, 12-rebound outing for Ouray (0-4, 0-2 SJBL), while Saunders finished with four points.

Up next for Ignacio (2-1, 1-1) will be the Webb Toyota/Kirtland (N.M.) Central Basin Girls' Invitational, Jan. 5-7, 2012.

JV Cats start league play hot

By Joel Priest
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Ignacio's Isaiah Harrison didn't look to record an assist — well, not like that.

And Ridgway's Bryan Felberg never imagined a breakaway layup — well, definitely not like that. And then have the two points credited to the Bobcats?

Both had to believe it, and chalk it up to the proving grounds of junior-varsity high school basketball. Having spun around 360 degrees in pursuit of a defensive rebound bouncing over his head, Felberg suddenly found himself with possession, not knowing the ball had been deflected by a teammate and off Harrison's head back toward the Demons' vacant basket.

With nothing but space and opportunity ahead, or so he thought, Felberg scored the hoop. It was the equivalent of Minnesota Viking defender Jim Marshall's infamous wrong-way NFL fumble return in 1964 — which, ironically, resulted in a safety and two points for the San Francisco 49ers when Marshall chucked the ball out of the end zone in celebration.

The hoop blooper didn't lead to catastrophe on the IHS Gymnasium scoreboard on Friday, Dec. 9; Ridgway's JV would still lead 34-30 after three quarters. But

after four, and a whale of a game from sophomore forward/center John House, the Bobcat JV squad emerged victorious in its 2011-12 opener.

Sinking three three-pointers, House keyed Ignacio's 22-6 fourth-quarter charge and finished with a 27-point performance in the 52-40 win.

Against Ouray the following morning, House netted eleven points more in the first half as IHS led the Trojan JV 27-14 through two frames.

Then, foreshadowing the varsity's hailstorm, the treys fell fast and furiously. Jalen Pena netted two, House hit one, as did Isiah Tucson, and just like that Ignacio was separating fast and furiously, 39-16. Sam Mestas cashed the team's ninth with 3:48 still left in the third, putting the Cats — coached in the contest by varsity



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio JV forward Angel Ortiz (33) battles Ridgway's Koy Reed for a rebound during the Bobcats' Friday, Dec. 9 season-opener inside IHS Gymnasium.

boss Chris Valdez (Shane Seibel was present for Ridgway) — up 42-20.

Every bomb proved vital; Ouray suddenly mounted a solid response before IHS, driven by House (20 points), put the Trojans down for good, 58-44. Pena finished with 10 points and Tucson six.

Unbeaten Wyatt leads wrestlers

By Joel Priest
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Capturing two individual titles in two days, Ignacio senior Colton Wyatt not only won the Bloomfield (N.M.) Invitational and the Dove Creek "Dawg Fight" Dec. 9 - 10, but won seven of eight matches by pin — including Austin Wilcox of Monticello, Utah, for the 195-pounders' title at DCHS.

Christian Acosta of Piedra Vista (Farmington, N.M.) proved a much tougher out, but the junior bowed by a 7-6 score in the bracket finale inside Bobcat Arena as Wyatt improved to 12-0, the last Ignacio Bobcat still undefeated.

Technically speaking, that is. Senior Alex Pena (1-0) was held out of action, possibly in preparation for this weekend's Warrior Classic in Grand Junction, IHS's last slated action until 2012.

Senior 152-pounder Teagan Overturf improved to 11-2 (all his wins by pin) with his third-place win in Dove Creek, stop-



photo Joel Priest/Special to the Drum

Ignacio's Iaasic Pena wards off a low shot against Dolores during the season-opening Wolverine Classic inside Bayfield H.S. Gymnasium on Saturday, Dec. 3.

ping Norwood's Kolby Starks after losing to Nucla standout Tray Sickels. First place was his in Bloomfield though, with a 5-0 mark and title win over Farmington's Vladislav Zakharov.

Senior Jeff Herrera went 2-2 in Bloomfield, where Ignacio placed seventh as a team, taking fourth at 132, but did not compete at DC (where Ignacio also finished seventh).

Iaasic Pena improved upon his fifth-place finish in Bloomfield with a third in Dove Creek at 120 — via a 9-2 win over FHS's Conner Rasmussen. New heavyweight Jason Taylor brought back another fifth for IHS from Bloomfield, as did 182-pounder Sonny Sanchez and new 138-pounder Klayson Smith.

The prestigious Warrior runs Friday and Saturday, Dec. 16-17 at Colorado Mesa University.